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And They Were There

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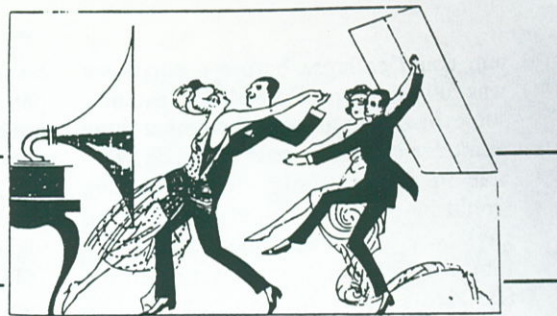
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And They Were There

Reports of Meetings

Column Editors: **Sever Bordeianu** (U. of New Mexico)
and **Julia Gelfand** (UC, Irvine)



We had many reports of meetings for this issue, including one of the 1993 Charleston Conference. We have run as many as we had space for in this issue. The others will be carried in the April issue. Thank all of you for sending them!
— SB and JG

The Journal at the Crossroads: A One-Day Seminar for Librarians, Publishers, Subscription Agents and the Readers of Serials

Jointly organized by **The Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers (ALPSP)** and **The United Kingdom Serials Group (UKSG)**
held in London, England,
on Wednesday, September 22, 1993

Report by **Brian Cox**
(Secretary, UKSG and also of
Pergamon Press fame)

125 delegates attended consisting of 60% librarians and 40% publishers, and there was a lively and informed dialogue both with the speakers and the panel at the end of the afternoon. The seminar was chaired with skill and aplomb by **Gordon Graham**, sometime chairman of **Butterworth** and presently the editor of **LOGOS**, *The Professional Journal of the Book World*.

Bernard Donovan, Secretary, ALPSP spoke on "Why and How a Journal is Published: The Author, the Editor, and the Review Process." Bernard spoke as a scientist and former journal editor and explained the reasons why research papers are published. He mentioned the need to support applications for research funds from grant giving bodies and as a means of career advancement. He also stressed that research could only be completed by publishing the results, without which the work might just as well never have been done and the knowledge thus gained, lost to succeeding generations with the research investment entirely wasted. He explained in some detail the essential role of referees. He also included a short overview of a report to be

published shortly by the Royal Society, the British Library, and ALPSP on the reasons why scholars publish (*The STM Information System in the UK*, ISBN 0854034773)

He also addressed the subject of electronic publishing, with particular reference to a paper by **Sir Peter Swinnerton-Dyer** which was published in *Serials* last year ("A System of Electronic Journals for the United Kingdom," volume 5, no.3, pp.33-35, November 1992). Altogether his presentation explained to a library audience why the printed journal is so successful in publishing and distributing scientific research. (Bernard's paper was published in full in the November issue of *Serials*, *The Journal of the UK Serials Group*.)

Robert Welham, Director, Information Services, **Royal Society of Chemistry**, spoke next on "The Role of the Journal Publisher." Robert described in some detail the way in which the Royal Society of Chemistry runs its journal publishing program. He too stressed the organization of the refereeing process and also the editorial input, particularly with regard to aims of ensuring clarity, scientific accuracy and retrievability. He explained how new technology has already made significant improvements in the publication of the traditional printed journal. Concerning the future he stated his belief that, whatever form transmission of the results of scientific research might take, control of its quality and organization of it so that it can be searched and individual items retrieved, would remain essential. It was likely, therefore, that publishers would continue to undertake these tasks which were traditionally theirs. He agreed that exactly how they might undertake this was difficult to forecast but he felt that anyone attempting to make such a forecast should start with researchers and their needs rather than with publishers and librarians.

John Cox, Managing Director of **B.H. Blackwell, Ltd.**, next spoke on the topic of "Can Dinosaurs Evolve? The Future of Publishers, Vendors, and Librarians."

John, also Director of **CARL UnCover**, had some interesting things to say about the future of publishers, booksellers, and librarians. He felt that rising prices combined with almost static library budgets, was bound to highlight the use of document delivery and increase interlibrary loan. Since, however, the cost of interlibrary loan is beginning to be seen as expensive, he felt that document delivery services such as UnCover would expand to fill this gap and would thereby provide new revenue to journal publishers. He explained that UnCover plans to cover 25,000 journals and although originally based only on the academic libraries in the state of Colorado, it now includes **UCLA**, **Stanford**, **National Library of Australia**, and the **Research Libraries in Ireland**.

He saw the way ahead as following developments in the entertainment industry which has a far larger and less selective market and mentioned specifically the activities of **Rupert Murdoch** in providing satellite television around the world. He also gave details of the plans by **Times-Mirror** in the USA to provide an electronic book which would be handheld, be the size of a paperback, and cost about \$100. Testing for this begins in 1994. (John's paper will be published in 1994 in a forthcoming issue of *Learned Publishing*, *Journal of the Association of Learned and Professional Society Publishers*.)

The next speaker was **Bernard Naylor**, University Librarian at the **University of Southampton**, on "The Implications of Current and Future Initiatives on Libraries." A member of the **SCONUL** committee, Bernard gave an excellent presentation of the problems that he saw libraries and publishers facing in the future. He felt that whereas there may be some confidence and a measure of agreement about the likely eventual future pattern of research communication in the form of network publishing, there is of necessity much uncertainty about timescales and about the intermediate scenarios. He hinted that there was a danger that the present sys-

tem could collapse before a successor was fully in place. He had, for instance, some reservations about whether high resolution color terminals would be available to all university students which would be essential if the printed word gave way to a wholly networked system for scholarly communications. (Bernard's paper will be published in *Serials* in 1994.)

David Brown, Consultant, **DJB Associates** spoke next on "New Innovations in Journal Publishing." He presented a most informative and up-to-the-minute look into the future which will be published in a forthcoming issue of *Learned Publishing*.

Robert Campbell, Managing Director of **Blackwell Scientific Publications, Ltd.**, followed David with a talk on "The Future of Journal Publishing." Bob explained that from a slow rate after the second world war, new journals had been launched in large numbers each year but that we are now again in a steady state. He recommended that his audience visit the United States and see what is happening there, since they are developing products which are aimed at the individual scholar thereby by-passing the library. Since some scholars are publishing 10 papers a year in order to obtain promotion, the quality of production is not important to them. With journal prices up by 15% per annum and budgets not increasing by more than about 2%, journal publishing is under pressure, but the system is more efficient than we sometimes think, and whereas the circulation of some journals is declining others are still increasing, depending on field and overall quality.

He thought that some new income will come to publishers from document delivery from such organizations as **CARL UnCover** and **ISI**, but alas not from the British Library Document Supply Centre. Since the Association of Research Libraries in the USA (ARL) estimates that the cost of interlibrary loan is \$25-40, some commercial form of document delivery is good value for money. He felt that the national libraries cannot expect much help from publishers if they do not pay a fee for document delivery which journal publishers certainly need to fill the financial gap which will appear from lost subscription sales.

He followed up a comment by David Brown to the effect that 50% of journal articles are not cited by explaining some of his experiences with ADONIS, which

he felt did not reflect the usual citation pattern, since a paper could be read but not cited and ADONIS showed clear evidence of serendipity.

He considered that the 1950's—1970's were easy for journal publishers whereas things have gone wrong in the 1980's, but in the 1990's we will perhaps see a return to real publishing since some companies have burnt their fingers and dropped out of the activity. He felt that savings could be made in the production area by taking over the work traditionally undertaken by printers which was possible with computer aided production (CAP), thereby enabling the journal publisher to cut his costs. He felt that more energetic marketing was necessary since booksellers and library staff do not do this for the publisher as willingly as they did 10 or 20 years ago. He felt that new journals should be selected more carefully in smaller numbers but marketed very hard to the appropriate peer group around the world.

He mentioned that whereas there were many difficult stories about university and library funding, one department in Oxford University this year had made a profit of £47,000 in its overall annual budget resulting from research work undertaken for industry.

There was also some new innovative journal publishing. **The American Society of Immunology** now publishes its 10 journals on CD-ROM in ASCII format and claimed to be selling these profitably even though there were only 3 library subscribers, with sales being mainly to individual scientists. Other American society publishers were following suit and putting their complete but small collections on CD-ROM cumulatively. Bob sees the future in terms of personal electronic libraries with access to local and area networks and perhaps links to major publishers and also to a subject classified collection of CD's. Like everyone else, he couldn't tell us when this would happen, but he felt that it would be before long. He mentioned that the EEC had reported that we have a huge European publishing industry which we should mobilize and sell more successfully to the world at large.

The Panel Discussion

The speakers were joined in the afternoon for the panel discussion by **Ruth Lawrence**, **The Law Society**, **Elspeth Scott**, **The Wellcome Foundation**, and

David Wells of the **Modern Humanities Research Association**.

A puzzled librarian asked that if costs continue to rise faster than inflation with the result that he was subscribing to less titles, how could he expect to see the cost reductions which Bob Campbell seemed to forecast. John Cox commented that if the customers have a finite amount of money to spend and the unit cost of the product is going up, customers must order less. He felt, however, that librarians could use their power as customers in what was a falling market.

Fitton Rowland (**Royal Society of Chemistry** and **University of Technology, Loughborough**) mentioned that his sales unlike the USA were declining to members who now expect their employers to order books and journals for them to read as part of their research.

Valerie Ferguson of **John Rylands Library**, University of Manchester, commented that students are forced to use the library as a resource and thus document delivery is very much on the increase. She wondered, however, what would happen in the USA and elsewhere when governments ceased to fund the networks as free highways.

Bernard Naylor said that he was hearing from university teachers that course students need journals not textbooks, particularly in the third year of their undergraduate degree courses. Furthermore, since monographs cannot be written and published in three-year funding cycles, lecturers must publish journal articles, not only for tenure, but also to attract funding for their institutions. Bernard also told us that in answer to a recent SCONUL survey some 25 libraries (half of the members of SCONUL) had replied to the effect that they were fortunate if less than 10% of their titles had been canceled for 1994. Cuts had been worse in previous years and they may be worse still in future years.

There was a lengthy discussion about differences in subscription rates and service charges quoted by subscription agents. **Paul Harwood** of **Swets** suggested that librarians should carefully compare such quotations with the actual charges in the invoices which are rendered by the agent at a later stage. John Cox mentioned the competition among agents and the activity in acquiring former independent agents such as **Bumpus**, **H.K. Lewis**, **Bailey**, **Majors**, etc. He also commented that some publishers gave no discount and on the whole

the discount levels on journal subscriptions was lower than that given to travel agents.

A delegate from **Academic Press** commented that there was pressure on publishers to publish good material even if the number of pages, frequency, and size of the journal, and consequently price, increased. He felt that this policy, although not popular with librarians, was essential if publishers were to continue to serve the research community.

There was a discussion about whether the peer review process would apply to electronic journals and if not, whether networks would become overloaded with unrefereed material of little scholarly value.

**Chicago Conference on the Future of
Federal Government Information**
Chicago, October 29-31, 1993

Report by **Kathleen Keating**
(Government Information Librarian,
U. of New Mexico)

A group of 160 government documents librarians and information special-

ists met in Chicago and produced a report, "Reinventing Access to Federal Government Information." This report provides a framework for the delivery of government information to the American citizens for the present and into the 21st century.

The following report summarizes the document and proceedings which were also printed in the *Dupont Circle Reporter: An Informal Newsletter for the Federal Depository Library Community*. Legislation has been introduced in the 103rd Congress which may change the Depository Library Program, the Government Printing Office, and the Joint Committee on Printing.

The following document is a proactive approach from the Depository Library Community to participate in the restructuring of government information delivery. For a complete copy of this report please contact your local Federal Depository Library. As with all things like that, time is of the essence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Public access to government infor-

mation is a basic right of the American people. Achieving the ideal of universal public access requires cooperation on many levels. Formal partnerships, with mutual responsibilities and obligations, must be established between government information producers, libraries, and other information providers, and a central coordinating government authority. These ties must create a flexible infrastructure that can incorporate changing technologies and user needs, and acknowledge their interdependence.

Development of the emerging National Information Infrastructure presents challenges to existing Federal information dissemination programs. It also offers new opportunities to improve public access to government information and to strengthen information dissemination programs supported by libraries, government agencies, and other information providers.

MISSION

The mission of a Federal Information Dissemination and Access Program, offered through libraries, is to provide and



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ensure free and equal access to government information in usable and multiple forms for the people of the United States of America.

Framework for a New Federal Information Dissemination and Access Program

A Federal Information Dissemination and Access Program is a cooperative network among agencies, a central coordinating government authority, libraries, librarians, and the public. In this partnership:

The Public — *Owns government information and must always have access to it and *Determines the success of the Program through formal and informal evaluation

The Agencies — *Create information products and services with input from users *Provide useful and timely government information products for dissemination through the Program and other channels *Provide technical and product user support and training via the cooperative library network

The Central coordinating government authority — *Disseminates or provides access to government information products, regardless of form, except those specifically excluded by statute *Provides comprehensive catalogs or locators using standardized descriptions of government information products in partnership with other government agencies *Cooperates with other government agencies to establish appropriate standards and regulations and to assure compliance with the Program *Cooperates with other government agencies, libraries, and other information providers to ensure that government information products within the program are archived and retrievable

Libraries and librarians — *Organize, maintain, promote, and preserve collections of government information products and act as a conduit to resources available beyond the local library *Serve as intermediaries in a complex information environment and assist patrons in the identification, use and access of government information products

Revitalization of the Federal Depository Library Program

The existing Depository Library Program is in a period of transition. Fiscal, technological, and policy developments

compel the depository community to identify new directions for the Program. In the next five years:

SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS will: *Provide access to government information via electronic networks *Improve communication with federal agencies, federal information centers, and depository libraries *Assume a proactive role in the development of new electronic products and services in the federal agencies *Maximize the resources of the Depository Library Program

DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES will: *Meet established minimum technical and service guidelines to support access to government information products *Work to identify grants and other financial support to acquire network connections, equipment and technical expertise *Create a depository library association that effectively represents the interests of participants and encourages and supports sharing of expertise

Negotiating Services and Fees With Subscription Agencies A Seminar Presented by Basch Associates

Silver Spring, MD, December 10, 1993

Report by **Frances C. Wilkinson**
(University of New Mexico)

The cost of this one-day seminar (with lunch!) was \$295.00. The seminar is offered several times each year in various locations around the U.S. Advertised as "building your negotiating skills and enhancing your understanding of domestic and foreign serials subscription agencies, serials publishing and pricing, the relationship between subscription agencies and publishers, and the significance of library sales to both parties," the seminar that I attended had sixteen participants, including two domestic serial vendors. This number was an optimal size for a workshop, allowing participants to ask specific questions and to share information with peers.

I attended this seminar because our library is preparing a Request for Proposal for our domestic and foreign vendor contracts. I hoped to increase my knowledge of the process and to polish my negotiation skills. I had read several testimonials from notable, respected serials librarians and I had also heard a variety of comments regarding this semi-

nar from various colleagues and vendors. Although I wasn't sure what to expect, I discovered that the seminar was thorough, well-balanced, and consistently positive and informative.

Buzzy Basch designed and presented the seminar. The stated objective was not negotiating techniques per se (although some were presented), but rather, how to determine what we need in our library, and how to apply this knowledge to the negotiating process with the subscription agent. After an overview illustrating how subscription agencies actually work, we could see how this information could affect our actual negotiations. Throughout the seminar we learned the importance of two concepts, "Information is power" and "Knowledgeable librarians are the best vendor customers."

The seminar was structured around several broad topic areas — library subscription service and fee negotiations. Each of these areas had several components. For example, the total library subscriptions projected for 1990 through 2004 can be as much as \$1.5 billion. That figure represents power and librarians should not assume a passive position in vendor negotiations. Knowledgeable librarians can pick and choose their options in subscriptions, in purchase plans, and in agents, if an agent is to be used at all.

The seminar continued with an examination of how agencies promote themselves. Some possible strategies are: age (old and established vs. new and innovative), size (big is better vs. small is beautiful and personal), market/area/subject specialization (country of origin vendor vs. "Buy American"); technological sophistication, automated services, electronic links, etc. We discussed U.S. vs. foreign agents and how they differ, and sources of agency revenues (publisher discounts and customer service charges). We reviewed publisher discount history and agency operating costs, service fee calculations and several methods used to calculate them, such as fixed percentage of subscription price, a formula, a flat fee per title, and the agent's cost plus fee. A range of service fees levied by agents, depending on library type and publication type, were explained. Librarians need to know how much they are paying for service fees and how those fees are calculated. These fees and agreements should be monitored by checking invoices, credits, and

bill-laters. Pre-payment discounts and their real value were next on the agenda, and carefully analyzed. Finally, we discussed the importance of agency service schedules. What is the agent's turnaround time on claims, orders, and adjustments? When and how do they issue renewal invoices? How quickly do they respond to phone, fax, and e-mail queries? What kind of management reports can they produce and how quickly?

All of this data can seem overwhelming. However, what is important for librarians to consider is determining exactly what their particular library wants, needs, and is willing to pay for. Their aim should be achieving the best value and service for the money based on their library's needs. Librarians must consider what kind of turnaround time they need; what kind of electronic capabilities they really need, will use, and are willing to pay for, etc. Librarians must filter the barrage of information from the agent and determine which aspects really matter to them. For example, issues such as under what conditions does the agent mark-up their price above the publisher price, or how often does the agent review their uncashed checks to the publisher, may be more pertinent than whether the agent has been in business 57 or 89 years.

The next topic we covered was a basic overview of publisher practices. We learned why publishers offer discounts to agents, typical publisher discounts, why subscription prices may vary among agents (reasons may include incorrect pricing data, timing of price file updates, errors, mark-up, early renewals, multi-volume discounts, foreign exchange practices, institutional vs. individual rates, etc.), and we considered European publishers' practices, which operate under laws, traditions, and interest rates different from those that apply in the U.S.

Planning for the negotiation was emphasized. Librarians should focus on 1) their SERVICE requirements (including quantitative methods for monitoring the extent to which the vendor meets these requirements), 2) their FEE tolerance — how much they are willing to pay, and 3) the VALUE of their account to the vendor. Service quality expectations must be clear. Agents must be on time, accurate, courteous, flexible, and knowledgeable. Librarians should consider whether, depending on their individual circumstances and library culture, they wish to consider segmenting their purchases rela-

tive to publisher discount, whether they wish to use multiple vendors, or whether they wish to consolidate all orders with a single vendor. We explored the concept of "maximizing the size of the account." We learned the importance of preparing the vendor to respond to our proposal request, as it "enhances the likelihood of obtaining favorable responses to formal or informal negotiations by 1) providing sufficient information that describes the serials collection, service requirements and patterns of service use, 2) identifying mandatory service requirements, 3) indicating priorities that will apply in the award of the contract, 4) structuring the bid to permit awards to multiple vendors (if desired), and 5) guarding against unintentional disqualification of vendors." To negotiate a satisfactory service package the librarian must clearly identify needs including delivery requirements, new orders, renewals, invoicing/credits/statements, claims, management support, and additional services. The reasons why libraries change agents were discussed, such as poor service, innovations by another vendor, desire to consolidate suppliers, desire to segment buying, vendor mergers, etc. The notion of agents encouraging "fear, uncertainty, and doubt" regarding changing from their agency to another, and the librarian's perceptions of changing agents were examined along with problem areas to consider if you do change, and the myriad types of assistance the new vendor can and should provide for you in the event of a change. This "vendor change assistance" should be queried in the bid/proposal. Finally, some alternative acquisition strategies were presented.

In conclusion we must all remember that librarians "have the power to make negotiations work: publishers need libraries, agents need libraries, and libraries make the decisions."

For information on the next scheduled seminar, write Basch Associates, 860 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, IL 60611, call 312-787-6885 or fax 312-787-6779. Buzzy has also written a book on the subject entitled *Buying Serials: A How-To-Do-It Manual for Librarians* by Bernard "Buzzy" Basch and Judy McQueen. A review in *Library Journal* evaluated it as "a practical and valuable manual for all parties involved in serials." ☛

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